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## ABSTRACT

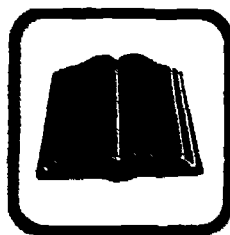
The "Clipboard Connection" is a methodology to facilitate the rapid circulation of relevant pre-existing materials from Chapter 1 Technical Assistance Centers (TACs) to their clients, teachers of educationally disadvantaged children in resource centers. Each "Clipboard Connection" consists of a lead sheet summarizing the contents of the materials (reprints of journal articles, brochures, etc.) to be distributed, and the materials themselves. This compilation focuses on the connection between reading and writing and its importance in the Chapter 1 curriculum. The following reprints and publication list are included: (1) "Portrait of James Gray," the founder of the National Writing Project, by Mark F. Goldberg (Educational Leadership, volume 47, number 3, November 1989); (2) a list of publications, including technical reports, occasional papers, and a quarterly journal, available from the Center for the Study of Writing; and (3) "Freewriting, Personal Writing, and the At-Risk Reader," by Norma Decker Collins (Journal of Reading, May 1990). (AF)

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# The Clipboard

## CONNECTION

May 1990



### Chapter 1

## Resource Center Curriculum & Instruction

The



Connection

At Option '90, Dr. Carol Olson, director of the California Writing Project, sparked participants with the creativity and sense of accomplishment derived from making the reading and writing connection. Her presentation emphasized that the inclusion of advanced thinking skills is complementary to, and advanced by, the continuous and consistent use of writing in the Chapter 1 curriculum.

### "Portrait of James Gray"

The National Writing Project (NWP) developed in 1973 by James Gray centers on the philosophy that in order to effectively teach writing, the teacher must also experience the writing process firsthand. Operating on the model of teachers-teaching-teachers, the Project addresses writing, reading, and thinking across the curriculum and stresses the importance of continued professional growth in teaching professionals.

### Publications Available from: Center for the Study of Writing

These publications stress the interrelationship of reading, writing, thinking skills and language acquisition.

### "Freewriting, personal writing, and the at-risk reader"

For disadvantaged and at-risk students, freewriting, personal writing, and imaginative writing are means by which to gain language proficiency. By utilizing such writing strategies, students learn to solve problems, gain self-understanding, and develop fluency and confidence as writers. Collins also maintains that in addition to providing "vehicles for self-expression," these writing strategies become "tools for discovery, analysis, and evaluation."

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## Technical Reports

1. Research in Writing: Past, Present and Future. \$3.50  
S.W. Freedman, A.H. Dyson, L. Flower and W. Chafe

This paper discusses the past twenty years of writing research, reviewing relevant research in order to posit a social-cognitive theory of writing and the teaching and learning of writing. The authors provide a constructive rationale for the research mission of the Center for the Study of Writing.

2. Unintentional Helping in the Primary Grades: Writing in the Children's World. \$3.00  
A.H. Dyson

Dyson explores children's classroom social lives, as revealed during journal time in a first/second grade class. Her analysis of peer social interactions shows such interactions to be key in contributing to and nurturing the skills and values associated with literacy.

3. A Good Girl Writes Like a Good Girl: Written Response and Clues to the Teaching/Learning Process. \$3.00  
M. Sperling and S.W. Freedman

Sperling and Freedman present a case study of a high achieving student in a ninth-grade English class, exploring and analyzing sources of the student's misunderstanding of teacher written response to her writing. They uncover a complexity of strategies that lie behind the misunderstanding, reflecting the information, skills, and values that teacher and student bring to the writing process.

4. Historical Overview: Groups in the Writing Classroom. \$3.00  
A. DiPardo and S.W. Freedman

In a review of research on the use of peer groups in the classroom—with a focus on peer response groups in the writing class—DiPardo and Freedman discuss the role of groups in the collaborative process of language learning. They suggest directions for future research on collaborative learning in general and on groups in writing classrooms in particular.

5. Properties of Spoken and Written Language. \$3.00  
W. Chafe and J. Danielewicz

Chafe and Danielewicz discuss important linguistic features that characterize different types of spoken and written language, from dinner conversations to academic papers. Taking into account the cognitive and social demands made on speakers, listeners, writers and readers in their interactions with one another, they analyze the reasons for these language differences.

6. The Role of Task Representation in Reading-to-Write. \$3.00  
L. Flower

In a study of college writers, Flower looks at the ways different writers interpret a "standard" writing task. In analyzing their reading and writing strategies, Flower demonstrates how students construct significantly different representations of a task, which leads to differences in their texts and their writing process.

7. **A Sisyphean Task: Historical Perspectives on the Relationship Between Writing and Reading Instruction.** **\$3.50**  
**G. Clifford (A joint report with the Center for the Study of Reading.)**  

Using perspectives drawn from American educational and social history, Clifford identifies five historical forces and probes their interacting influence on English language education: the democratization of schooling, the professionalization of educators, technological change, the functionalist or pragmatic character of American culture, and liberationist ideologies.
8. **Writing and Reading in the Classroom.** **\$3.00**  
**J. Britton (A joint report with the Center for the Study of Reading.)**  

Britton explores the classroom as an environment for literacy and literacy learning. He discusses ways in which teachers have developed strategies for encouraging children to learn to write-and-read—activities that have often been dissociated in classrooms but that together create a literacy learning environment.
9. **Individual Differences in Beginning Composing: An Orchestral Vision of Learning to Write.** **\$3.00**  
**A.H. Dyson**  

Looking in depth at three first graders during classroom journal time, Dyson explores the interconnections of the children's speaking, writing, and drawing as indications of their developing acquisition of written language. Her analysis reveals the complexity of the writing acquisition process, as the three symbol systems interact in different ways for the different students.
10. **Movement Into Word Reading and Spelling.** **\$3.00**  
**L.C. Ehri (A joint report with the Center for the Study of Reading.)**  

Drawing on studies of the role of spelling in the reading process, Ehri discusses ways in which spelling contributes to the development of reading and, conversely, how reading contributes to spelling development. The role of writing in reading and spelling development is also discussed.
11. **Punctuation and the Prosody of Written Language.** **\$3.00**  
**W. Chafe**  

Prosody—rises and falls in pitch, accents, pauses, rhythms, variations in voice quality—while a salient feature of spoken language, is not fully represented in written language. Reporting on a study of younger and older readers, Chafe explores the relationship between what he calls the covert prosody of writing and the principal device that writers use in order to make it at least partially overt, the device of punctuation.
12. **Peer Response Groups in Two Ninth-Grade Classrooms.** **\$3.00**  
**S.W. Freedman**  

Freedman looks at peer response groups in two ninth-grade college preparatory classrooms. Her analysis of the students' face-to-face interactions reveals how students approach the substance and form of their writing, self- and other-evaluation, problem-solving, and audience awareness.
13. **Writing and Reading: The Transactional Theory.** **\$3.00**  
**L. Rosenblatt (A joint report with the Center for the Study of Reading.)**  

This report focuses on some epistemologically-based concepts relevant to the comparison of the reading and writing process which Rosenblatt believes merit fuller study and application in teaching and research.



14.    National Surveys of Successful Teachers of Writing and Their Students: The United Kingdom and the United States  
S.W. Freedman and A. McLeod

For this study, Freedman and McLeod collected self-report survey data from successful elementary and secondary teachers of writing and from a sample of secondary students in the U.K. to parallel Freedman's 1987 U.S. survey data. Based on these surveys, this report compares the teaching and learning of writing in the two countries, focusing on what occurs inside classrooms as writing gets taught and learned.

\$3.50
15.    Negotiating Among Multiple Worlds: The Space/Time Dimensions of Young Children's Composing  
A.H. Dyson

In this examination of the drawing, talking, and writing of kindergarteners, first-, and second-graders, Dyson focuses on children's growing awareness of text time and space as they develop as authors of fictional prose. This study questions the developmental appropriateness of traditional assumptions about "embedded" and "disembedded" language and about "narrative" and "expository" prose.

\$3.00
16.    How the Writing Context Shapes College Students' Strategies for Writing from Sources  
J. Nelson and J.R. Hayes

This study explores processes college students use to write assigned research papers. It examines the skills and assumptions that freshmen and more advanced college students bring to the tasks of selecting paper topics, finding and selecting sources of information, and developing an organizing structure and thesis for their papers.

\$3.00
17.    Written Rhetorical Syntheses: Processes and Products  
M. Kantz

Addressing the ways in which college students synthesize source material when they write research papers, Kantz presents case study analyses of the composing processes and written products of three undergraduates, supplemented by quantitative analyses of a group of seventeen undergraduate research papers. From this analysis, she offers a tentative model of a synthesizing process.

\$3.00
18.    Readers as Writers Composing from Sources  
N.N. Spivey and J.R. King

Extending research on writing processes as well as reading processes, this study examines the report-writing of sixth, eighth, and tenth graders, as accomplished and less accomplished readers work with source texts and compose their own new texts. Analyses reveal composing patterns connected not only to grade level but to reading ability as well.

\$3.00

#### Occasional Papers

1.    Interpretive Acts: Cognition and the Construction of Discourse.  
L. Flower

This paper discusses the cognitive processes which make reading and writing constructive (and intentional) acts. Flower elucidates a cognitive framework for understanding the acts of reading and writing, contrasting it with other familiar frameworks from other disciplines.

\$3.00

2.     What Good is Punctuation? \$3.00  
       W. Chafe

Based on Chafe's study of punctuation and the prosody of written language, this paper discusses ways that punctuation reflects both a reader's and writer's "internal voice." The paper offers insights for teachers and learners about the assumptions that lie behind the use of punctuation in writing.
3.     Drawing, Talking and Writing: Rethinking Writing Development. \$3.00  
       A.H. Dyson

Based on Dyson's studies of primary grade children engaged in journal writing, this paper discusses how children move among and negotiate multiple worlds: the text world they create on paper; the social world that they share with their peers; and the wider experienced world of people, places, events and things. Children's texts thus become increasingly embedded in their lives.
4.     The Construction of Purpose in Writing and Reading \$3.00  
       L. Flower

Based on a decade of studies of the cognitive processes student and expert writers reveal while composing text, this paper discusses two interrelated concerns: how writers come by/find/create their sense of purpose, and whether readers are aware of or are affected by writers' purposeful text construction.
5.     Writing and Reading Working Together \$3.00  
       R.J. Tierney, R. Caplan, L. Ehri, M.K. Healy and M. Hurdlow

Drawing on their teaching experience and research perspectives, the authors discuss specific classroom practices in which writing and reading work together. They focus on students' social and personal growth, growth in their learning, development of their critical reading, and improvements in their writing and reading skills as a result of these practices.
6.     Narrative Knowers, Expository Knowledge: Discourse as Dialectic \$3.50  
       A. DiPardo

DiPardo explores the schism between narrative and exposition and argues that instruction which fosters a "grand leap" away from narrative into the presumably more grown-up world of expository prose denies students the development of a complex way of knowing and seeing, robbing them of critical developmental experience with language.
7.     The Problem-Solving Processes of Writers and Readers \$3.00  
       A.S. Rosebery, L. Flower, B. Warren,  
       B. Bowen, B.C. Bruce, M. Kantz and A. Penrose

The authors focus on writing and reading as forms of problem solving that are shaped by communicative purpose. They examine the kinds of problems that arise as writers and readers attempt to communicate with one another—as writers and readers try to write to a specific audience, for example, or as readers try to interpret an author's meaning—and the strategies they draw upon to resolve those problems.
8.     Writing and Reading in the Community \$3.50  
       R. Gundlach, M. Farr and J. Cook-Gumperz

The authors review recent scholarship on writing and reading outside of school—that is, in the community, both at home and in the workplace. They explore writing and reading as social practices and consider the implications of this social view of literacy outside of school for writing and reading instruction in school.

9. Bridges: From Personal Writing to the Formal Essay  
J. Moffett

\$3.00

Moffett discusses the transition from writing personal-experience themes to writing formal essays. As a framework for understanding this transition, he presents a schema that groups different writing types and shows their connections. As illustration, he includes examples of student writing from his anthology series *Active Voices*.

**NWP/CSW *Quarterly***

The *Quarterly*, a joint publication of the National Writing Project and the Center for the Study of Writing, is devoted to issues in research and in practice surrounding the teaching and learning of writing. The *Quarterly* is published in January, April, July and October. A one-year subscription is \$6.00.

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## Freewriting, personal writing, and the at-risk reader

Norma Decker Collins

There have been many times in the past 10 years when I have written to make sense of my life, when I turned to writing to understand a death in my family or to ponder a career change. Always, I began by writing questions. My goal was to discover what was "really" on my mind. Over time, I learned to let the writing talk to me. Finally, I learned to trust it.

I knew if I began to write quickly and freely and listened to the voices in my head, I could capture them on paper and address them one at a time. What I was doing was freewriting. Freewriting is a generative process. It is an act that makes thinking conscious and visible. The goal is to write for a certain number of minutes without stopping. The only requirement is to keep writing (Elbow, 1981). Many writers use freewriting as a prewriting strategy. It is used to explore ideas, activate ideas, help a writer find out what s/he knows and feels about a topic. Often, it is used as a vehicle for additional writing (Bordner, 1988; Macrorie, 1988).

A recent study conducted in secondary reading classrooms involved freewriting as a self-contained activity (Decker, 1989). Students who were in remedial reading classrooms at two high schools in the Rocky Mountain area began each session of reading class by writing for 10 minutes.

In a classroom of adolescent disabled readers who were generally turned off to school, the initial writing faltered. Many students complained that they could not think of anything to write. For the first week, the teacher helped them brainstorm for topics. The students jot-listed the things they liked to do and the things they disliked. They looked around the room and wrote about the posters on the wall, the quotes on the chalkboard, the daily announcements on the bulletin board. Within the second week, they stopped asking, "What shall I write?"

When students were asked what was on their minds and encouraged to express their thoughts in writing, they began to explore their inner lives (Mayher, Lester, & Pradi, 1983; Newkirk, 1985). Because they knew that the writing was not being graded or corrected, they relaxed. Whenever the teacher responded to their writing, s/he wrote comments dealing directly with what the students said in the writing. They knew that the teacher was as interested in them as s/he was in their texts.

Students in secondary remedial reading classrooms are often students at risk. Many have been involved in 10 years or more of formal reading instruction that frequently served as a testing ground for their self-worth. Most students are in need of an opportunity to revalue themselves.

Asking students to write personally, choosing top-

ics of interest to them, gives them the message that they have something worthwhile to say. Students who write personally and imaginatively learn to solve problems through writing. The writing serves as a vehicle for discovery and for self-understanding (Mayher et al., 1983).

Because adolescence is a time of self-consciousness, personal writing allows adolescents to explore their perceptions and feelings. It is an opportunity for students to think about their own thinking (Newkirk, 1985). Through writing poems, stories, journals, and freewriting, they gain comfort with written language and with themselves (Decker, 1989).

The research of Britton, Burgess, Martin, McLeod, & Rosen (1975) suggested that language proficiency is derived from an engagement in writing, talk, reading, and experience rather than through the acquisition of discrete skills taught in isolation. Personal writing is an avenue for at-risk students to engage in pertinent language use. It is a way for the learner to explore, question, and make sense of the world (Mayher et al., 1983). Language scholar Toby Fulwiler (1988) described personal writing as that which approximates talk. Its purpose is to help the writer think, question, and express himself/herself. Some forms of personal writing include journals, diaries, rough drafts, personal letters, notes, and freewriting as a conclusive act or as part of another mode of writing.

Fulwiler (1988) described a second category of writing called imaginative writing. Its purpose is to create language artfully and playfully. Forms include song, poetry, drama, fiction, and many others. In the Decker (1989) study, both imaginative writing and personal writing emerged when students were invited to write daily for 10 minutes in high school reading classrooms.

The third category often mentioned as an additional mode of writing is expository writing. It typifies most of the writing students are asked to do in school, including the term paper, the report, a persuasive essay, a business letter, as well as other forms.

Personal writing and imaginative writing are often overlooked in the classroom. Yet, research in reading and writing supports the inclusion of both categories in school (Applebee, 1984; Britton et al., 1975; Forbes, 1976). Personal writing is the natural place for students to begin their experience with writing (Kirby & Liner, 1981). It helps students gain fluency and confidence as writers as well as learn about themselves and their world. Personal writing gives apprehensive learners a positive experience with reading and writing.

Writing in remedial reading class is a way for disabled learners to reassess themselves. When students in the Decker study perceived reading and

writing as useful and accessible, their behaviors changed. Reluctant readers became readers of their own texts; students who had avoided writing wrote daily; the interdependency of reading and writing was established. The result was an increased sense of self-worth and a better understanding of language.

As a writer, I have experienced the potential for self-understanding that writing offers. The act of writing has provided me with insights I could not have gleaned elsewhere. Personal writing, imaginative writing, and freewriting are vehicles for self-expression. For me, they have become tools for discovery, analysis, and evaluation of my personal and professional life. The same potential is available to students in secondary remedial reading classrooms.

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ERIC/RCS, the Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills, collects and disseminates materials related to research, instruction, and theory in reading, writing, speech communication, English, journalism, and drama.

The ERIC/RCS center is located at Indiana University, Smith Research Center, Suite 150, 2805 E. 10th St., Bloomington IN 47408, USA.

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# Portrait of James Gray

Early in Jim Gray's education career, he formed a vision of "teachers teaching teachers" writing. Fortunately, he persisted and turned that vision into a reality. Since the National Writing Project began in 1973 (as the Bay Area Writing Project), it has touched the lives of nearly a million teachers—and Jim is still its Director. He is also a Senior Lecturer at the University of California–Berkeley, where he accepted a position in the teacher education program in 1961.

Usually dressed in a sweater and slacks, Jim Gray occupies a small simple office at the University of California–Berkeley, furnished with borrowed Writing Center furniture. The walls are lined with pictures of National Writing Project site directors, certificates of merit, and plaques. Gray has no doctorate, has done no major research, and confesses that he stands somewhat in awe of the enduring teacher-centered local writing project he created 16 years ago, now the National Writing Project. He grants ample credit to dozens of teachers and professors who have worked with him over the years, and particularly to Albert "Cap" Lavin, an inspiring teacher and Gray's partner in the early years of the writing project.

## The Dawn of a "Revolution"

In 1973, Gray set out, quite simply, to help solve the local UC–Berkeley problem of "entering freshmen not being able to write at the level that the university required." What he was really after was nothing less than "a revolution in the treatment of teachers." He had long dreamed of a "part-

nership between the universities and the schools, where the universities can recognize the expertise of the best classroom teachers." His vision was to bring together gifted teachers of writing to reflect on what they were doing, read whatever was known about writing, do some writing of their own and share it with each other, and then after careful

training and coaching become "teachers of teachers." His voice and eyes lit up when he told me. "The project is revered by classroom teachers."

But as Gray recalled for me the period during which his vision first crystallized, his enthusiasm and pride shifted to nostalgia, hurt, and finally anger. Almost three-and-a-half decades ago, as a young English teacher in San Leandro, California, he had worked hard—rummaging on Saturdays through used book stores, building a classroom library, constructing bookshelves out of apple crates, getting kids to read and write, and then read some more. After four years, his principal asked him to speak to the faculty about the art of teaching. "It was a shock, this invitation, but it helped me realize that, indeed, I was doing some good things." Soon other teacher groups sought Gray as a speaker.

Against this backdrop, two English professors from UC–Berkeley visited his school, trying to figure out why "Johnny couldn't read," among other deficiencies. The professors, however well intentioned, reeked condescension.

Photograph by Sarah Holzapfel





**Of the project, one teacher said, "I've learned more about teaching writing from *writing* than from anything else."**

They didn't know me from Adam. But I remember their coming to school with their party line about what we should be doing. What they said increasingly rankled because they didn't know me, and they made this automatic condemnation of what we were doing without knowing what we were doing. They never visited my classroom, they didn't see the library I had or my kids. . . . They didn't know the impact I was having. . . . It was an early experience, but it stuck. It was the initial experience that led to this teachers-teaching-teachers project. It wasn't much . . . just an afternoon talk one day in the '50s by a couple of academic professors, a couple of English professors, that stayed with me. It shaped the way, once I had the opportunity, in which I would teach teachers—never that way. I would assume that the best teachers knew a lot.

#### **From Vision to Reality**

The years passed, but that experience stayed firmly etched in Gray's mind. His own public school teaching experience began with a near disaster in Wisconsin, where he had difficulty with control and curriculum, but ended with success in California, where both areas improved dramatically—the result of hard, painstaking work. Gray worked briefly in a community college, then in 1961, in his mid-30s, settled at UC-Berkeley's teacher education program.

The time seemed right to begin turning his vision into a reality. Gray had formed some clear ideas about what would work to improve the quality of student writing. Through tedious

observation plus trial and error, he had also learned what worked in professional development. He knew that the top-down model did not work. University professors were too removed from the classroom, particularly the elementary classroom, and they didn't have much practical experience with the writing of schoolchildren. But he did want their research knowledge and their university setting, which provided neutral ground and time, to set up programs.

In developing the Bay Area Writing Project—the precursor to the National Writing Project—Gray recalled three staff development programs in English he had been involved in during the 1960s: a local California program, the National Defense Education Act Project English program, and a state-run English Teacher Specialist program. He reflected on what had, and had not, worked. Gradually, some basic assumptions began to emerge.

For example, the notion that slow, careful—sometimes even glacial—development is lasting is a critical feature in the project's history. This belief, a product of his years of staff development work, is one that is rooted in Gray's boyhood. An only child and an asthmatic, he had spent much time alone, puzzling through books, learning cautiously but accurately how he best did things and what he liked, especially during slow summer days above the ragweed line in Northern Michigan. Gray also recalled his boyhood in Whitefish Bay, Wisconsin, and the indirect power of Miss Poppam's hand-selected high school literature class. In that uncharacteristic class, in which the students read a different English novel each week, Miss Poppam had strolled around the room, encouraging their reading and writing. On Fridays she had set aside time for her students to discuss their writing with each other.

Gradually, more fundamental beliefs about the project began to form—for example, that writing teachers must write—but never an established curriculum, never a formula for "the one right way of doing things," and never, never, the notion that no further evolution could take place. These

assumptions, stated in the modest NWP brochure, undergird each original and replicated site and remain simple and direct (see "Basic Assumptions").

After the project had been operating for three years, it was clear that Gray was on to something. His commitment to the authority of excellent teachers, the evolution of a successful program, and the continuous, careful development of each replication saved the project from an empty-minded explosion that would have destroyed its spirit. Further, Gray never publicized the project or reached out to the education world in any way other than the word-of-mouth testimony of teachers. Professors and teachers in partnership contacted him, Gray added, by "writing a letter of inquiry, visiting us, placing a phone call. I'm very proud of that. No huckstering—we wait for the phone to ring."

Briefly, here's how the program works. During the school year teachers are selected for a three- to six-week summer training session. The selection committee, made up of teacher consultants and professors, looks for candidates who already know something about writing, are good teachers, and show potential for becoming skilled teacher trainers. During the summer session, the teach-

**What Gray was really after was nothing less than "a revolution in the treatment of teachers."**



ers write learn about writing from each other and from research, work in writing/editing groups of about five teachers, and begin to practice how to teach other teachers. In the process, teachers often form ideas for their own research and establish subgroups (ESL or mathematics or high school or elementary teachers) that continue beyond the course. However, the real force of the project is in the writing the teachers do. "As good as everything else has been," one teacher said, "I've learned more about teaching writing from *writing* than from anything else." During their own writing, teachers experience what their students go through, what revision means, which assignments work, the joy that can come from writing, and how much more there is to learn about writing, both practice and theory.

### More Than a Bare Writing Course

The National Writing Project has always been more than a bare writing course. Its consistent appeal to teachers, and probably a main reason for its extraordinary expansion, according to Gray, is that "we have a great interest, and have from the beginning, in the professionalization of teachers, so we're constantly stretching the opportunities open to teachers...." The

**The project attracts teachers of all disciplines, particularly those who want to grow professionally through writing or to help students learn through writing.**

project, of course, appeals to English teachers and elementary teachers who are interested in writing but also attracts teachers of all disciplines, particularly those who want to grow professionally through writing or to help students learn through writing.

For example, Gray told me about Bob Tierney, a California science teacher and football coach, whose experience with the project led him to

conduct his own research, an effort that has grown so much that it is now large enough to be called the "teacher-researcher movement." Tierney's hypothesis was that if students wrote a great deal in science, they would know and retain more at the end of the year than students who did little writing. So he learned how to set up an experiment, worked with a colleague, and then tested his idea. To his dismay, however, his first test found no significant difference between the achievement levels of the writing and the non-writing classes. However, Tierney felt certain there *had been* a difference. A year later, when he tested the students, his perception proved accurate: "The class that had written had continued to understand and remember what they had learned" (Tierney, n.d.). Later, Tierney reversed roles with his colleague and did the study again—with the same dramatic results.

The professional growth of teachers is a valuable outcome of the project. It is now common in NWP sites to find teachers keeping diaries of classroom observations and getting involved in research questions. For example, Marian Mohr, a Fairfax County, Virginia, high school teacher and co-director of the Northern Virginia Writing Project, leads workshops on teacher research. And several New York teachers collaborated with Professors Sondra Perl and Nancy Wilson on an ethnographic study of writing, and the upshot was a book titled *Through Teachers' Eyes* (Perl and Wilson 1986, Heinemann Books).

### A Model of Simplicity and Strength

Since its inception, nearly a million teachers have been touched in some way by the National Writing Project, which today has 166 sites in 46 states and 7 foreign countries. The project has a director, a co-director, 11 regional directors, an advisory board, a publications list, a fund-raising program, and a series of national and regional meetings throughout the year—not to mention "a realistic goal of establishing 250 sites nationwide." The power, the appeal, and the efficacy of the project are be-

### National Writing Project: Basic Assumptions

1. Student writing can be improved by improving the teaching of writing, and the best teacher of teachers is another teacher.
2. Programs designed to improve the teaching of writing must involve teachers at all grade levels from all subject areas.
3. The writing problem can best be solved through cooperatively planned university-school programs.
4. Change can best be accomplished, not by transient consultants or by prepackaged systems, but by those who work in the schools.
5. Meaningful change can occur only over time. Staff development programs must be ongoing and systematic.
6. What is known about the teaching of writing comes not only from research but from the practice of those who teach writing.
7. Teachers of writing must write.

**The power, the appeal, and the efficacy of the project are beyond question. Yet the model is simplicity itself—and perhaps therein lies its strength and durability.**

yond question. Yet the model is simplicity itself—and perhaps therein lies its strength and durability.

Of Gray's work with the project, former Secretary of Education William Bennett wrote in a letter,

The model staff development program you have developed, that has universities working together with schools at all levels, merits the support of those who value excellence in education.

John Hall of the National Endowment for the Humanities stated unequivocally in a letter that

the National Writing Project has been by far the most effective and "cost-effective" project in the history of the Endowment's support for elementary and secondary education programs.

The encomiums from education leaders and others go on and on: James Howard of the Council of Basic Education, cur-

riculum expert James Moffett, even Roger Rosenblatt of *Time* magazine have applauded Gray's efforts. But perhaps Paul Diederich of Educational Testing Service, in the concluding section of his evaluation of the Writing Project, said it best and most forcefully:

With all my bias in favor of hard data, I am already pretty sure that this is one of those ideas that will last—like Langdell's invention of the case method of teaching law about 1870.

### **An Obvious Idea**

In recognition of Gray's achievement, in 1980 UC-Berkeley granted him a senior lectureship and permanency of employment. He is the only director the National Writing Project has ever had—its founder, leader, and inspiration. Through perseverance and the steady refinement of his basic ideas, Gray has turned the project into what the American Association for Higher Education called "an outstanding and nationally significant example of how schools and colleges can collaborate to improve American education" and what the National Council of Teachers of English called "an exemplary national resource." He sees the simple, powerful truths that support university-school collaboration with reassuring clarity. He is as respectful of teacher knowledge as any figure in American education.

Yet Jim Gray claims that all he did was follow the obvious: "I just don't see any differences between academics and high school or elementary teachers. We take for granted that, to be effective, a professor will have to be a continuing scholar. I take for granted that continuing education has to happen for the high school and elementary school teacher as well. That's such an obvious idea."□

### *Reference*

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